

Message Text

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46

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 INR-11 LAB-06

NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 AGR-20 SP-03 STR-08 TRSE-00

SWF-02 CIEP-03 FRB-03 OMB-01 EUR-25 NIC-01 DODE-00

PA-04 USIA-15 PRS-01 L-03 H-03 DRC-01 /142 W

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R 081240Z AUG 74

FM AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3423

INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

UNCLAS JOHANNESBURG 0811

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, SF

SUBJ: COMMENT ON WAVE OF BLACK STRIKES SINCE MID-JULY

1. DURING THREE WEEKS WHICH HAVE PASSED SINCE BLACK CONSTRUCTION WORKERS CALLED SIMULTANEOUS AND APPARENTLY COORDINATED WILDCAT STRIKES AGAINST SEVERAL FIRMS IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF COUNTRY IN SUPPORT OF DEMANDS FOR IMMEDIATE 7CENT PER HOUR WAGE INCREASE (JOHANNESBURG 719) THERE HAS LITERALLY NOT BEEN A SINGLE DAY ON WHICH BLACK WORKERS HAVE NOT BEEN ON STRIKE SOMEWHERE IN COUNTRY WHETHER ON EAST RAND OR IN DURBAN OR EAST LONDON OR VICINITIES OR IN THE FREE STATE.

2. WITH ONE OR TWO EXCEPTIONS E.G. STILL UNSETTLED FRAME STRIKE IN EAST LONDON (JOHANNESBURG 799) WALKOUTS, ALL OF THEM ILLEGAL, HAVE BEEN SMALL, BRIEF AND NON-VIOLENT AND HAVE BEEN SETTLED ON BASIS OF MODEST WAGE INCREASES. TAKEN TOGETHER, HOWEVER, THEY HAVE SERIOUSLY UNDERMINED WHAT REMAINS OF SOUTH AFRICA'S CHERISHED REPUTATION OF BEING ISLAND OF INDUSTRIAL HARMONY AND STABILITY IN WORLD SEA OF DISAFFECTION AND UNREST. IN ADDITION THEY HAVE

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UNDOUBTEDLY PLAYED IMPORTANT ROLES IN GETTING SUCH CONTRASTING

PERSONALITIES AS ANGLO-AMERICAN CHAIRMAN OPPENHEIMER AND WHITE
TRADE UNIONIST GROBLER TO CALL ON SAG TO SET UP INDUSTRIAL
RELATIONS COMMISSION OF INQUIRY (JOHANNESBURG 776) AND UNITED
PARTY LEADER GRAAFF TO DO DRAMATIC FLIP-FLOP IN PARLIAMENT IN
FAVOR OF TRADE UNION RIGHTS FOR BLACKS.

3. AS STRIKES CONTINUE TO BREAK OUT (WITH LATEST SERIOUS
WALKOUT AUGUST 6 REPORTED TO INVOLVE MORE THAN 3500 WORKERS AT
GOOD HOPE TEXTILE MILL AT ZWELITSHA NEAR EAST LONDON) MORE AND
MORE MEMBERS OF INDUSTRIAL AND BUSINESS COMMUNITIES REACHING
CONCLUSION (HOWEVER RELUCTANTLY) THAT PRESENT SAG-ENDORSED
INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS SYSTEM AS MODIFIED LAST YEAR SIMPLY NOT
ADEQUATE TO COPE EFFECTIVELY WITH RAPIDLY INCREASING BLACK
UNREST. THIS HELPS EXPLAIN FAVORABLE RESPONSE TO OPPENHEIMER'S
COMMISSION PROPOSAL AT INSTITUTE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
NATIONAL CONVENTION LAST WEEK (JOHANNESBURG 795).
GUTHRIE

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